Connected Green Infrastructure

Evidence Paper 5

Overview

This appendix contains evidence documents that support Policy FUL/03

Connected Green Infrastructure (361)

Green Infrastructure Map – Wide Area

Green Infrastructure Map – Within Village

Original source documents are available via the web addresses of the contributing organisations as follows

369 The Cambridge Nature Network (Full Report) - May2021
https://www.wildlifebcn.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/CambridgeNatureNetworkStage3ReportFINAL%28lowres%29_0.pdf

370 The Cambridge Nature Network (Summary) - May2021
https://www.wildlifebcn.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/CambridgeNatureNetworkSummaryDigitalVersion.pdf

371 Cambridge Green Belt Study (LDA Sept2002)
https://www.scambs.gov.uk/media/7579/cambridge-green-belt-study.pdf

372 Natural England 87 East Anglian Chalk
http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6417815967891456

373 River Cam Manifesto, Cam Valley Forum, Aug2019
https://camvalleyforum.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/The-River-Cam-Manifesto-final2.pdf

374 Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy - June2011
https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/2557/green-infrastructure-strategy.pdf

375 Living Landscapes - Cambridgeshire Chalk
https://www.wildlifebcn.org/living-landscapes/cambridgeshire-chalk

376 Natural Cambridgeshire - Doubling Nature Initiative
https://naturalcambridgeshire.org.uk/news/doubling-nature-in-action-launch-event/

377 SCDC Biodiversity SPD July2009
https://www.scambs.gov.uk/media/17068/biodiversity-supplementary-planning-document.pdf

A Connected Green Infrastructure - Vision

1. Introduction

Increasing biodiversity habitats and green spaces within the Neighbourhood Plan Area is considered vital for the identity of the village and the wellbeing of its inhabitants. A good environment contributes to resident's quality of life and it is important to manage and develop existing green spaces for social, amenity and wildlife benefit and to ensure that a connected natural green infrastructure will exist around new development sites.

The land surrounded Fulbourn is mainly intensively farmed and this mono-culture approach inevitably leads to low biodiversity. This is offset by several areas of normal biodiversity such as the Fulbourn Nature Reserve (SSSI), Roman Road, Wandlebury and Fleam Dyke that enable plants, insects and animals to survive. To remain viable these 'islands of biodiversity' need to be connected to each other by hedgerows, water courses and urban green spaces. Together these 'islands' and 'corridors' constitute the 'connected green infrastructure.

A vision for Fulbourn is that the village with its gardens, trees and green spaces is an integral part of the wider connected green infrastructure such that it provides many connected sites that support nature and also contribute to a rich environment for its residents.

The character and distinctiveness of Fulbourn relies on protecting the integrity of the existing green spaces, which contribute to the biodiversity and landscape features of the village.

In the research done for the Parish Plan in 2008/09 residents were asked

> *"What do you think could be done to protect and encourage wildlife in Fulbourn' (Q68) and responders were asked to rank a number of possible measures, which included "Promote wildlife within the built-up area" and 78% of respondents (777) said "worth doing" or "very important".*

2. Fulbourn – Part of the Bigger Picture

Natural Cambridgeshire (EV376); a partnership of conservation organizations, local authorities, business leaders, the health sector and farming envisages a doubling of the area of rich wildlife habitat and green space in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough by 2050 to make the area a …..

> *"world class environment where nature and people thrive and businesses prosper".*

This partnership has recently launched a series of initiatives designed to protect, restore and enhance key wildlife habitats. While many of these are on a landscape scale, a community approach is also encouraged to work towards doubling nature close to home. The Fulbourn connected green infrastructure fits into this plan.

A nature recovery network mapping exercise undertaken by the Wildlife Trust and Cambridge Past Present and Future will identify priority landscape areas and locations for investment in the enhancement and creation of natural green space as part of a local nature network. Between these priority areas 'nature-friendly' land management and farming practices will help wildlife to thrive in the wider landscape.

The charity Buglife[1] has an ambitious project to create 'B-Lines', a series of 'insect pathways' running through our countryside, towns and villages. Over 97% of all flower rich grasslands

have been lost in England since the 1930s reducing pollen and nectar sources and leading to a serious decline in wildlife that depends on wildflower-rich habitats. The aim of the B-lines project is to encourage the restoration and creation of a series of wildflower-rich habitat stepping stones between existing wildlife areas creating a network across the landscape. To be successful this long-term project will require the co-operation of landowners, farmers, local authorities, communities, wildlife organizations and businesses. One such indicative 'corridor' for potential enhancement projects runs from Wandlebury through Fulbourn village towards Wilbraham.

The Charity Plantlife[2], which is a British conservation charity working nationally and internationally to save threatened wild flowers, plants and fungi, has campaigns to encourage householders to take steps to increase wildflowers in their lawns, and to work with councils to manage roadside verges to better protect wildflowers.

Advice on the management of green spaces to benefit more wildlife, is available from the South Cambridgeshire District Council Ecology Consultant, the Plantlife Charity web site, as well as the web sites of the Royal Horticultural Society[3], the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds[4], the English Hedgerow Trust[5] and a Wildlife Trust Report on reversing the decline of insects[6].

3. Fulbourn – Developing the Connected Green Infrastructure

The Fulbourn connected green infrastructure relies upon the protection of existing green resources around the village and their appropriate management. Within the Fulbourn Neighbourhood Plan several Local Green Spaces (LGS) and Protected Village Amenity Areas (PVAA) are described and it is an aspiration that future developments within the area will contribute additional green spaces and facilitate the interconnections between these and those already existing.

With appropriate planting village gardens also make up potentially valuable habitat, which help form a 'green network' across the village. It has been estimated[1] that gardens cover nearly half a million hectares of the UK, which is a bigger area than all of our nature reserves. In Fulbourn the mature gardens in areas such as Cow Lane and Pierce Lane make a significant contribution to the green networks across the village with the associated tree canopy.

The ongoing management of green spaces significantly contributes to their success as islands and corridors of biodiversity.

Good practice includes;

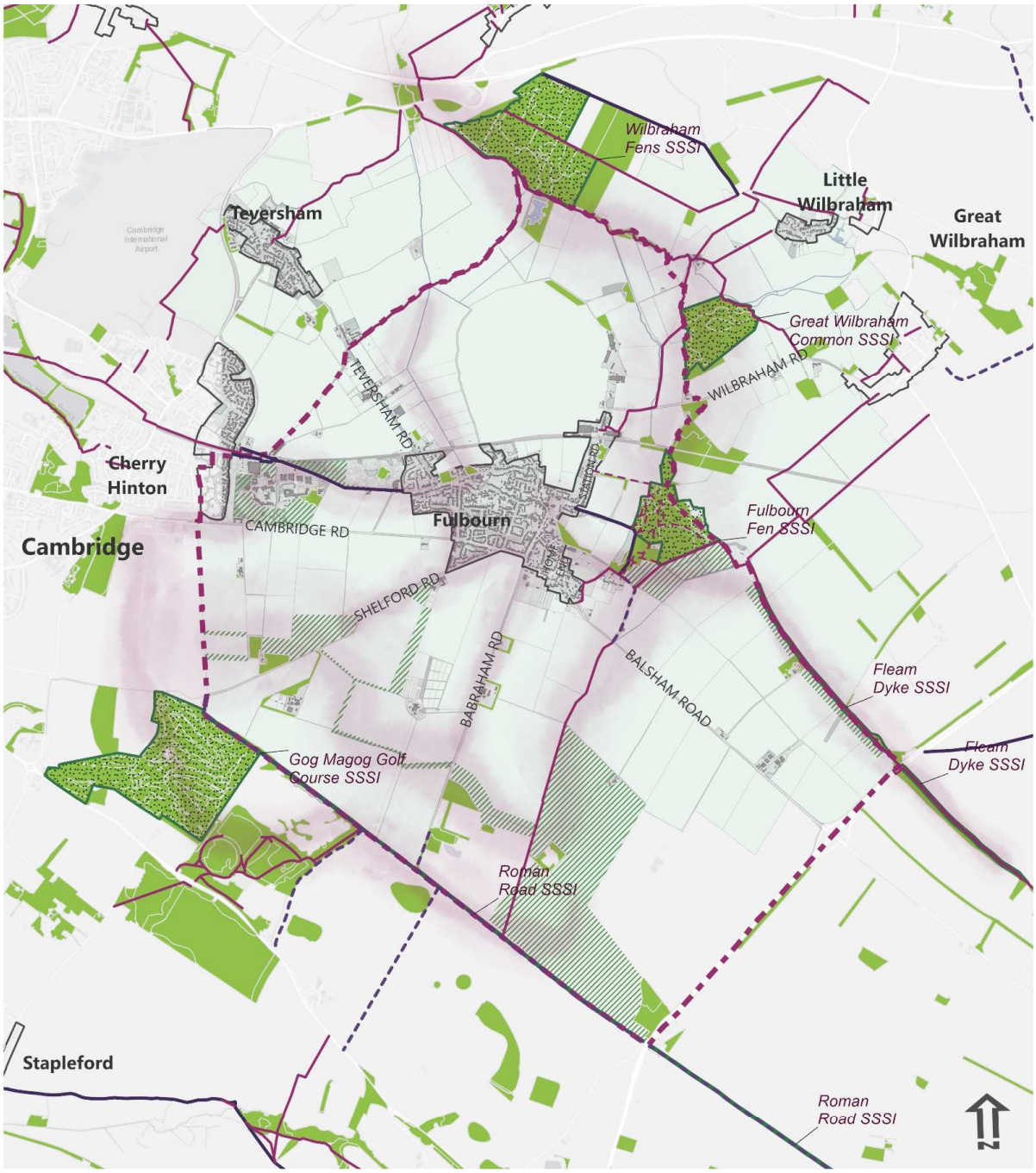
1. Grass on open spaces and verges should be managed to allow wildflowers to bloom – potentially a great sight as well as good news for bees and other insects.
2. Benefits for wildlife can be obtained by adjusting the timing of planned maintenance activities, e.g. reduced frequency of grass cutting to allow wild flowers to bloom between cuts, hedge cutting timed to avoid bird nesting season and the removal of seeds and berries before winter. Particularly relevant advice is available from the Plantlife web site and the B-Lines project on the Buglife web site.
3. Areas identified for the enhancement of wildflower displays should have grass cutting reduced to once or twice a year. Grass cuttings to be removed to reduce the vigour of the grass and to favour the wildflowers.

4. Contractors should be required to exercise care in the use of strimmers along the base of hedges etc to avoid harm to small animals.
5. Many of the trees in the village are of a similar age and a clear policy of succession needs to be established on private as well as public land to maintain this aspect of the village character. This should apply to all trees including those not covered by Tree Protection Orders or not growing within Conservation Areas.
6. There are opportunities to plant new standard native trees on some of the larger green spaces away from houses and to plant smaller 'street tree' species, as appropriate near roads and buildings. Where possible, trees and shrubs should be grouped together rather than using the 'ornamental' approach of planting a line of specimen trees. Huntsmill Green has been mentioned above as a model green with this natural planting of native species and this would apply to any greens on new developments as well as enhancing the existing greens.
7. Guidance is available from The Woodland Trust[7] on the benefits of trees, the selection of tree species for residential areas and the maintenance issues to be considered. This is aimed at developers of new housing areas, but it is also relevant for additional tree planting in existing residential areas.
8. Care should be taken in choice and location of trees near homes, e.g. not to locate trees next to driveways where insect honeydew could drop onto cars and cause problems for the residents. As noted in the Fulbourn Village Design Guide, the choice of species (for new and existing developments) should also take account of local settings, the threat of climate change, as well as the incidence of tree disease in the area.
9. On new developments the builders should be encouraged to have wildlife friendly planting in the show home gardens, with leaflets on wildlife friendly gardening available for home purchasers. Leaflets on gardening with wildlife could be included in the Fulbourn Welcome Pack available to new residents and to be made available to all villagers at public locations.
10. Residents in the wider village can be encouraged to enhance their gardens for the benefit of wildlife. The mix of appropriate green cover, flowers, vegetables and wildlife such as birds, pollinators and hedgehogs provide a pleasant environment for all to enjoy, as well as providing health benefits.

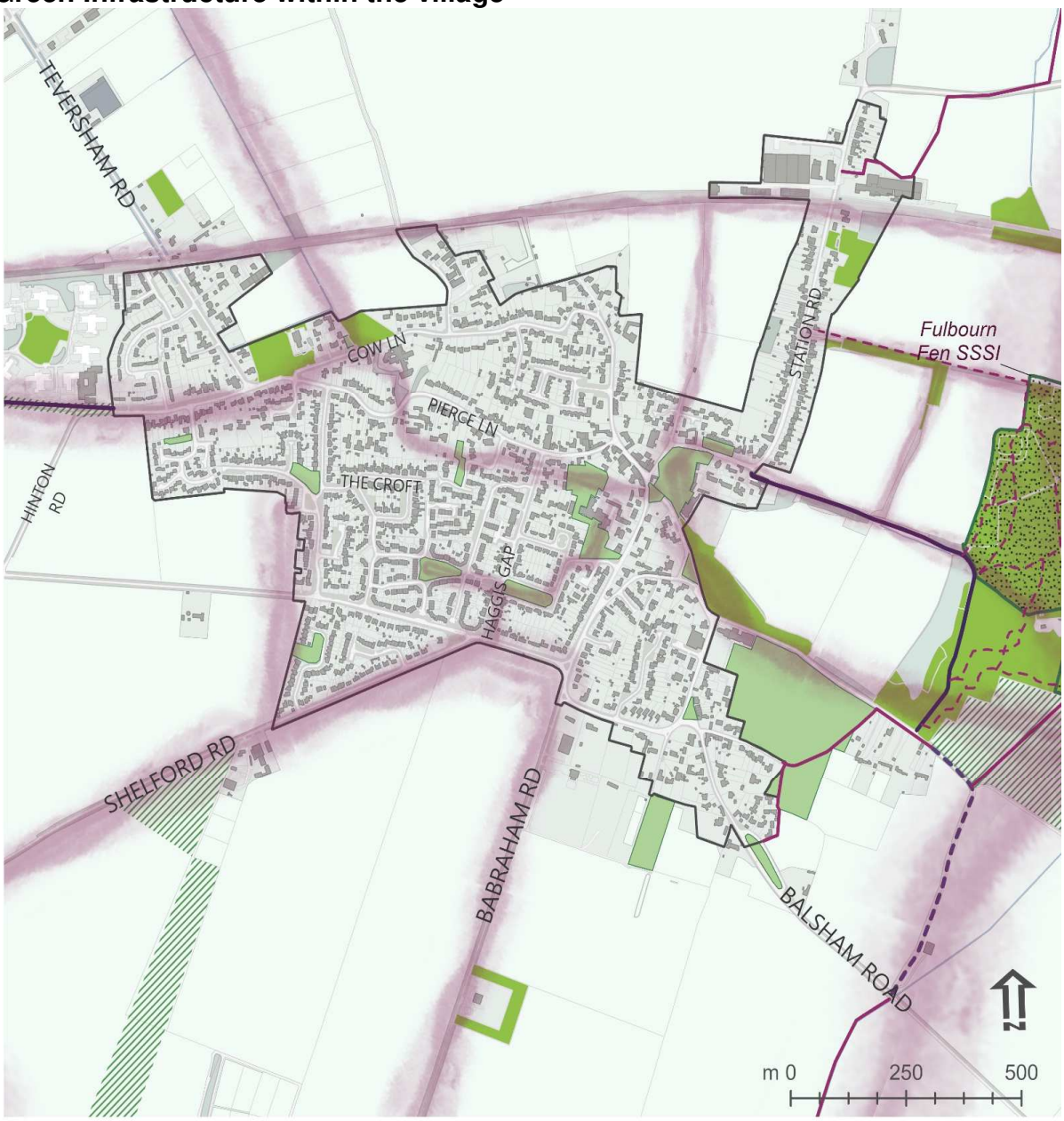
4 References

1. Buglife, www.buglife.org.uk/ourwork/b-lines/
2. https://www.plantlife.org.uk
3. https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/wildlife-garden/wildlife
4. https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/gardening-for-wildlife/
5. https://hedgerows.co.uk/
6. Reversing the Decline of Insects – A Report by the Wildlife Trusts, Lead author, Professor D. Goulson (2020)
7. Residential Developments and Trees – A Guide for Planners and Developers, A Report by the Woodland Trust (January 2019)
8. https://www.cotonlovespollinators.com/

Wide Area Green Infrastructure



Green Infrastructure within the village



- Designated Neighbourhood Area
- Development Framework
- Indicative Green Infrastructure Network (Pol. FUL/03)
- SSSI (Local Plan Pol. NH/05)
- Existing Habitats and Woodlands
- Possible New Habitats / Natural Greenspace (Wildlife Trust)
- Other Green Spaces
- Bridleway
- Byway
- Public Footpath
- Permissive Path